

2468
*The Antiquity and Usefulness of Episco-
pal Confirmation :*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

RICHMOND, in **SURRY**:

On Sunday, the 11th Day of April, 1708.

A T A
C O N F I R M A T I O N

Administred by the Right Reverend Father in God,

JONATHAN,

Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

By *Nicholas Brady*, D. D. Minister of *Richmond*, in
Surry, and Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty.

Publish'd by his Lordship's Order.

London : Printed for *John Chantry*, at the Sign of *Lin-
colns-Inn-Square*, at *Lincolns-Inn Back-Gate*. 1708.

14/2

SEYMOUR

CONFIRMATION

THE STATE OF NEW YORK
IN SENATE
January 10, 1882
REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE
IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION
PASSED BY THE SENATE
MAY 1, 1881

To the Right Reverend Father in God,
Jonathan Lord Bishop of Winchester,
Prelate of the most Noble order of
the Garter.

My LORD,

IT is recorded of Jeroboam, to his lasting Infamy, that he made Priests of the lowest of the People; and it is the Glory of our Church, that Persons of the best Quality have not thought it below them to minister at her Altar; of which (I believe) we have at present as many living Evidences, as ever we had since the Reformation. There are some (I know) who will scarce allow a Clergyman to be a Gentleman, and look upon their several Characters as inconsistent; But your Lordship is a pregnant Instance how well they may be reconciled, and how happily they may adorn and set off one another: Courage, Generosity, Affability, and Integrity, ought to be the common Qualifications of them both; and these truly genteel Accomplishments cannot be wanting in a Clergyman, without making him sink below the Dignity of his calling: I am sure they are abundantly necessary at this juncture, and especially the first of them, Courage; when so many are ready to trample upon us for the sake of our Function, and so few pay it that regard to which it is justly entitled. These shining Qualities, my Lord, which were in some measure owing to your Birth as well as Education, gave you the happy Opportunity of distinguishing your self, in the worst of times and in the
A best

DEDICATION.

best of causes. These led you (indeed) into a Prison but more glorious than your Palace; and made you share in a Confinement; preferable even to Liberty: These have accompany'd you still through the several Stages of your Life, till they fixed you in that Post of Eminence and Dignity, upon which you reflect as much Lustre as you receive from it. Give me Leave (my Lord) to congratulate the Clergy of this Diocese, in the Enjoyment of a Prelate so worthy to direct them; so likely to protect them from the Insults of their Adversaries; and by whose Example Malicious Men may be convinc'd, That a Clergyman may be a true Friend to the Government, and yet not an Enemy to the Church of which he is a Minister.

And now (my Lord) accept of my humble Acknowledgments, for the Countenance you have afforded to my weak Endeavours, in commanding me to publish the following Discourse; by which you have given me the obliging Opportunity, of dedicating both that and my self to your Lordship.

And as I had the Happiness of receiving my Education in the same College, and at the same time, when it was honour'd with your Lordship's Presence; so I beg that I may always have the Privilege of stiling my self,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most
Obedient, and most

Oblig'd humble Servant,

N. Brady.

ACTS, VIII. 14, 15, 16, and 17.

14. *Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had receiv'd the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.*
15. *Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*
16. *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them ; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.)*
17. *Then laid they their Hands on them, and they receiv'd the Holy Ghost.*

WHEN the Number of Christian Professors began to increase ; when the Door of Faith was open'd to the Gentiles ; and the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved ; then the Harvest beginning to be plenteous, and

A

the

the Labourers being yet but few, it was convenient to pray the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest. The Almighty Father, who, with enlarged Bowels, always watch'd over his Church for good, took care to supply her several Necessities ; and gave some Apostles, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. For such a Distinction of Officers was abundantly necessary, to answer the distinct Occasions of the Church ; whereof some were to convey the Knowledge of the Gospel, to such as were yet ignorant of those glad Tidings ; and others to cultivate and improve it, in those who had already some Notion of it ; that so by their watering what the former had planted, God, in his own good time, might give the Increase. Pursuant to this Method of his gracious Dispensations, we find Philip the Deacon going down to Samaria, preaching there the Word of God, and giving Authority to his Doctrine, by Signs and Miracles which he did amongst them : But notwithstanding the Testimony of such divine Credentials, he proceeded no farther than to baptize and instruct ; the Power of conferring the Holy Ghost being peculiarly reserv'd to the Apostolical College, whose Privileges he durst not pretend to invade. And therefore the Apostles assembled

bled at Jerusalem, to ^(a) supply what was wanting to the Perfection of the Work, sent Two of their own Number to confirm these new Converts, who laid their Hands upon them, and they receiv'd the Holy Ghost; as we are inform'd at large in the Words of my Text.

And, indeed, I think the whole *New-Testament* can hardly furnish us with a more remarkable Passage, upon which we may ground the Necessity of *Confirmation*, according as it is now practis'd in the *Church of England*: And it affords us so large and comprehensive a Scheme of it, that all things useful to be known in relation to this *Ordinance*, may, in a very sufficient measure, be gather'd from it. Since therefore by reason of our late *Diocesan's* great Age, we have had few opportunities of exercising this Duty, and therefore many may be suppos'd to be unacquainted with its Nature; I shall endeavour to explain it with all the *Clearness* and *Brevity*, that so important and so large a Subject will allow of.

In which I shall pursue the following Method.

1st, I shall observe, that *Confirmation*, as it is now made use of in *Our Church*, is of *Primitive Aposto-*

(a) Id quod decrevit, à Petro & Joanne factum est; ut Oratione pro eis habitâ, & manu imposita, invocaretur & infunderetur super eos Spiritus Sanctus. *Cypr. ad Ju-
bajan.*

lical Institution : Because we find the *College of Apostles* expressly sending forth Peter and John, in order to confirm the baptized Samaritans, by laying Hands upon them, and praying for them.

Secondly, I shall prove, that the *Apostles* were, and consequently their *Successors*, the *Bishops*, are, the only proper *Ministers of Confirmation* : Because *Philip* (we see) assumed not this Power to himself, but left it entirely to *Peter* and *John*.

Thirdly, I shall shew, that the *Persons to be confirm'd* must have some certain *Qualifications*, in order to their *Admittance* : Because the *Samaritans* (we know) were instructed and baptiz'd by *Philip's Ministry*, before they were confirmed by the *Hands of the Apostles*.

Fourthly, and Lastly, I shall take Notice, that the due *Administration of this Office* has very happy *Effects*, and entitles to great *Advantages* : Because the *Samaritans*, (we are told) receiv'd the *Holy Ghost*, when the *Apostles* laid their *Hands* upon them, but not before.

1st, then, I shall observe, that *Confirmation*, as it is now made use of in *Our Church*, is of *Primitive Apostolical Institution* : Because we find the *College of Apostles* expressly sending forth Peter and John, in order to confirm the baptiz'd *Samaritans*, by laying *Hands upon them* and *praying for them*. If

If we seriously read over the *Rubricks* and the *Office*, and consider all things relating to this *Holy Ordinance*, we shall find them, as they are prescribed to us by *Our Church*, not only in themselves very rational and pious; but exactly accommodated to the *Standard of Antiquity*, and to the *Model* exhibited to us in *Holy Scripture*. For first, she endeavours like a careful *Mother*, to have her *Children* made Partakers of every Spiritual Benefit, as soon as they are any way capable of receiving them; and therefore she appoints that in their very *Infancy*, they should enter into *Covenant* with *God* by *Baptism*, through the Interposition and Suretiship of others; that they may thereby be cleansed from their Original Pollution, born again, and adopted as the *Children of God*: In the next place, that they may continue in obedience to their heavenly Father, and grow up and increase in his Friendship and Favour, as they advance in years and bodily strength; she requires that they be instructed as soon as they shall be able to learn, in the Nature of that *Covenant* which they made with *God* in *Baptism*; that they know the *Blessed Promises* made to them in that *Sacrament*; with the *Duties* and *Conditions* which they are engag'd to perform: and then farther, considering that these *Engagements* though highly to their advantage, were enter'd into for them without their knowledge or desire, and may

there

therefore want much of their wish'd-for Efficacy ; the Church again takes care to direct and desire, that as soon as they arrive at years of discretion, and have attained to some competent knowledge of their duty ; they should take upon themselves their Christian Profession, ratify in their own Person their Baptismal Promises, and receive by Confirmation the Gift of God's Spirit, to enable them to fight manfully against those Spiritual Enemies, which they must expect to encounter with, as good Soldiers of Christ Jesus. Indeed, had Our Church made Confirmation a Sacrament ; or had she given it the Preference to Baptism ; or had she loaded it with ridiculous and superstitious Ceremonies, as it is over-strain'd and dressed up by the Church of Rome ; we could not justify such practices by any Apostolical President, but must have left it under the Censure of Innovation and Will-Worship. But as Our Church in her Articles disowns it to be a Sacrament, so she makes use of no Ceremony but the Imposition of hands, which is very antient and very significative ; both to distinguish the Persons to whom the Blessing is given ; and (as the Church expresses it in the very Office,) to certify them also by this sign, of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them. And now can we have a better President for this, than that which I have proposed to you in the Words of my Text ? Or could this great Example be more exactly

exactly copied out, than *Our Church* has done in her method of *Confirming*? In which first the *inferior Officers* of the *Ministry*, do like *Philip the Deacon*, baptize and instruct; and the *superior Officers* afterwards, like *Peter and John*, confer the *Gift of the Holy Ghost*, by imposition of hands. But there are other passages in *Holy Writ*, which concur to the establishing of this *Ordinance*, tho' not in so large and so distinct a manner: As namely, the practice of *St. Paul* in relation to such as he had converted at *Ephesus*, in the 19th of the *Acts* at the 5th and 6th Verses; where this *Apostle* is said to have laid his hands, on those whom he had baptized in the Name of *Jesus*: And his reckoning it up in the 6th Ch. to the *Hebrews*, amongst the first *Foundations* and principles of *Christianity*, under the usual name of *Laying on of Hands*; where he joins it with *Faith and Repentance and Baptism*, with the *Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Life*. Now that *Confirmation* was commonly meant, by this expression of *Laying on of Hands*; we have not only the concurring Judgment of the Venerable ^(b) *St. Ambrose*, ^(c) *St. Cyprian*, and ^(d) *St. Augustin*, and indeed the general Consent of the

(b) οὕτω γὰρ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐλάμβανον, ὡς αὐτοῖς τὸ Παῦλος τὰς χεῖρας, φῆσιν ἡλθε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον:

(c) Qui in Ecclesiâ baptizantur, per præpositos Ecclesiæ offerantur, & per nostram orationem & manûs impositionem, Spiritum sanctum consequantur. Cypr. Epist. ad Jubaian. 73.

(d) Spiritus autem sanctus in solâ Catholicâ Ecclesiâ per manûs impositionem dari dicitur. August. in Donat. de Bapt. lib. 3. cap. 15.

Greek and Latin Fathers, (too numerous to be quoted upon this occasion) but also of the most valuable Modern Writers, and even such as in other matters differ widely from us; particularly Mr. Calvin and the Assembly of Divines: whose Judgment in this point is the more to be relied upon, that they cannot be supposed to be partially biased, in favour of the Government or Discipline of our Church, Mr. Calvin's Annotation upon the place is to this purpose . (e) *St. Paul joins laying on of hands with Baptism; because as there were two Orders of Catechumens, so there were two ways or methods of admitting them into the Church: Such as were new Converts and come to riper years, were required to give a personal account of their Faith, before they were admitted to the Sacrament of Baptism; whereas the Children of the faithful, because adopted from the Womb, and by right of promise belonging to the Church, were allowed to be baptized in their very Infancy; and when they grew up and were instructed in the principles of Religion, they not only offered themselves to be catechized and examined, but were admitted by another Symbol the Laying on of hands; which single Passage (says he) of the Apostle, carries along with it abundant demonstration, that this ceremony was of Apostolical Original: And tho' afterwards it degenerated into Supersti-*

(e) Calv. Annot. in Loc.

tion, as many other excellent Institutions did; yet (says he.) let us retain the pure institution, and correct the additional Superstition. And again farther in ^(f) another place he adds, that it was indeed an antient custom, that the Children of Christians after they were grown up, should be presented before the Bishops, to fulfil that Office, which was required of the adult at their Baptism, when they were examined by the Bishop according to a certain and common form of Catechism which they had; and that this action, which otherwise deservedly ought to be grave and holy, might have the greater reverence and honour, the ceremony of imposition of hands was also used. The Assembly of Divines, in their English Annotations on the same place tell us, that this Laying on of Hands is usually called Confirmation; which consisted, first, in examining the Baptized Persons, what Progress they had made in the Doctrine of Christianity; and secondly, in praying that God would settle them in the Faith, and strengthen them with the graces of his Holy Spirit: Now, say they, when the chief Pastor or Pastors of the Church, thus prayed for them, they also laid their hands upon them; whence this Apostolical Institution was called the Laying on of hands. I might add to this the Opinion of their celebrated Mr. Baxter, who calls it ^(g) the Apostolical imposition of Hands, for the giving of the Holy Ghost; but that I think the Opinion of their Founder and their

(f) Calv. Instit. Lib. 4. cap. 19. Sect. 4.

(g) Baxt. of Confirm. pag. 103. 119.

Representatives, are of sufficient weight to determine the present case. It would be too tedious (as I just now hinted) to produce the concurring testimonies of *Antiquity*; the mentioning of *St. Hierome* will be sufficient, and may justly supersede my quoting any others; who in his *Dialogue against the Luciferians* expresses himself thus. ^(h) I cannot deny (says he) but that it is the custom of the Church, that the Bishop should go abroad and impose his hands; praying for the Gift of the Holy Ghost upon those, whom Priests and Deacons had already baptized, in the remoter Villages and Country Towns. And now from all this we may fairly conclude, that *Confirmation*, as it is now administred in Our Church, has been a solemn *antient* and laudable custom, continu'd down to us from the time of the *Apostles*: Very justly then may the Bishop say, as he does in the Prayer which he makes in the Office; that after the Example of the Holy Apostles, he lays his hands upon the confirm'd Persons. And thus much shall suffice for the first thing proposed, to shew that this Rite of Confirmation, was of Primitive Apostolical Use and Institution. I proceed

(h) Non equidem abnuo hanc esse Ecclesiarum consuetudinem, ut ad eos qui longè in minoribus urbibus per Presbyteros & Diaconos baptizati sunt, Episcopus ad invocationem Sancti Spiritûs manum impositurus excurrat. Hieron. adv. Lucif. Tom. 11. pag. 187.

Secondly,

Secondly, to prove that the *Apostles* were, and consequently their *Successors the Bishops* are, the only proper *Ministers of Confirmation*: Because *Philip* (we see) assumed not this Power to himself, but left it entirely to *Peter* and *John*.

And this indeed is conformable to the constant *Practice*, as well as *Doctrine* of the *primitive Catholick Church*; deriv'd from the *Example* and *Tradition* of the *Apostles*, and recorded in my Text in the most exprefs Terms: For what can be more clear than the Information there given us, that ⁽ⁱ⁾ *Peter* and *John* were sent on purpose from *Jerusalem*, to confer the *Holy Ghost* upon the *Disciples* at *Samaria*? Whom tho' *Philip* had converted and baptiz'd, yet he offer'd not to confirm, as not being an *Apostle*, whose peculiar Office it was to collate the *Holy Ghost*, not to be usurped by any of an *inferiour Order*, without a *special* ^(k) *Commission* from *God* himself. And tho' there were other sorts of *imposition of Hands*, which were indifferently made use of by Men in *Holy Orders*; yet this of *Confirmation* has been sacredly reserved to, and practis'd only by the ^(l) *highest Order of Priesthood*: And the reason of this seems to be founded in the

(i) Id quod deerat, à Petro & Joanne factum est, &c. (ut supra) *Cypr. ad Jubai.*

(k) *Act. Ap. Cap. 9. Ver. 10, 11, &c.*

(l) Præfident Majores natu, qui & manum imponendi, & ordinandi potestatem habent. *Turmil. Ep. ad Cypr. A solis Episcopis, August. Quest. 44. in Nov. Test. Non nisi per manus Episcopi. Hieron. Dialog. adv. Lucifer.*

very Nature of the Duty itself: For the *χειροθεσία* or *ἐπιθεσις χειρῶν* which we always render by *laying on of Hands*, was^(m) derived to us *Christians*, from the Customs of the *Jews*, amongst whom it was made use of upon Three Occasions: In *creating of Offices*, in *Prayer*, and in *paternal Benediction*. Thus, when *Moses* was to constitute a Successor in his Office, he did it with this Ceremony of ⁽ⁿ⁾ *laying his Hands upon him*; when *Jacob* prayed for the Sons of *Joseph*, he laid^(o) his Hands upon their Head; and he also did the same when he solemnly blessed them. Answerably to these Three Uses of it, under the *Ceremonial Law*, we meet with Three Things in the *New-Testament*, to which it is accommodated under the *Gospel*: From *creating Successors*, or *Assistants in Office*, came the *laying on of Hands in Ordination*; from *Praying for them* was derived the ancient Custom of *laying Hands upon the Sick*, in order to their Recovery; and from *Paternal Benediction* we borrow the same Method, of *laying on of Hands in Confirmation*. Now this is a Resemblance of the *Patriarchal*

(m) *Manus impositio ex Hebræorum more ad Christianos venit, usumque habuit in omni precatone. Græc. Not. in Cass. ad Art. 9.*

(n) וַיָּהֲרֹץ בְּנֵי-טָלָא רֹחַ חֲכֻמָּה בִּי סִטָּה טָשָׁה אֶת יָדָיו עָלָיו

Deut. Cap. 34. Ver. 9.

&c. וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-יָמָיו וַיָּשֶׁה עַל-רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם (o)

Gen. Cap. 48. Ver. 14.

(p) Ibid.

Authority; and is therefore fitly appropriated to the *Fathers of the Church*, as that was always restrain'd to the chief Head of the Family. And, indeed, we cannot find any authentick Testimony, in *Ecclesiastical History*, that attests the contrary; and such as have sometimes been offer'd by our Adversaries, have already been proved to be surreptitious, or else to have been wholly foreign to the purpose: Whilst *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Ambrose*, and other *Fathers* do positively assert, That this was a (q) *Prerogative peculiar to the Apostles and their Successors*. And this I think, does sufficiently make out, that the *Apostles* formerly, and the *Bishops* at present, are the only proper *Ministers of Confirmation*. And here it is worth our while to take Notice, how exactly the *Old-Testament* agrees with the *New*; (r) since the first Lesson for the Day informs us, in the Matter of *Corah*, that God vouchsafed to be at the Expence of a Miracle, to assert the distinct Privileges of the *Higher Order of Priesthood*. I now go on to my

3d Proposition, In which I am to shew, that the *Persons to be confirm'd* must have some certain

(q) *ἡ ἐκείνη τῇ Ἀρχιεπισκοπῇ ἔσται ἀντὶ τοῦ ὅτι ἡ ἀρχαία συνήθεια*, *Dionys. Eccles. Hier. Cap. 5.*

τῶν Κορυφαίων. *Chrysostom. Hom. in 18. Cap. Act.*

Ad confirmationem unitatis in Ecclesiâ, Christi à Pontificibus fieri solebat. *Ambros. in Hebr. Cap. 5.*

(r) *Second Sunday after Easter. Num. 16.*

Qualifications, in order to their Admittance : Because the *Samaritans* (we know) were *instructed* and *baptiz'd* by *Philip's Ministry*, before they were *confirmed* by the *Hands of the Apostles*.

And, 1st, They must be such as *have been already baptiz'd*, *Confirmation* being a *Holy Ordinance*, not design'd to *make*, but to *establish* Christians ; not to *supply the Want of Baptism*, but only to *cultivate and improve* it ; and therefore it was very fit that it should come *after it*, and was administred to those of *riper Years*, *together with it*, as a necessary *Appendage* to that *Sacrament* : For tho' it is an *Ordinance* wholly *distinct* from it, yet has it a very near *relation* to it ; as being primarily design'd to enable us to *make good* those solemn Promises, to the *Observance* of which we are *bound* so strictly in our *Baptism*.

2^{dly}. They must be such as *have not been confirm'd already* ; because this *Rite* being closely allied to *Baptism*, is no more to be *repeated* than *That is* ; which being once *compleated* and *consummated* thereby, stands no longer in need of any farther accomplishment : And therefore the *Apostle* exhorts the *Hebrews* and with them all *Christians* under *Parallel Circumstances*, that they should make it their endeavour to *go on to Perfection* ; and not *laying again hereby the Foundation*, should attempt to
edify

edify by the higher Mysteries, which are provided for their Growth and Advancement in Religion: Neither Antient Practice, nor the design of the Institution, nor the reason of the thing, complying in any measure with the Ignorant Zeal of some, who have often been observed to catch at all opportunities, of having this great Office reiterated upon them.

3dly, Such only are truly qualified for Confirmation, as have attain'd to a competent Age; which Age is not to be fix'd to a set number of years; because of the different degrees of capacity, and the different manner of Education; but is to be determined according to their Proficiency, of which the Minister who presents them is the most proper Judge. None certainly should be admitted to this Holy Ordinance, but such as are qualified according to those Rules, which the Church has laid down in the Preface to this Office; namely, such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contain'd; and that not by road barely to run over the Words of them but with sufficient understanding of the sense and meaning; that so Children being come to years of discretion, and having learned what was promised for them by their Sureties in their Baptism, may with their own Mouth and consent, openly before the Church; ratify in Person the solemn

solemn Covenant and contract, into which (when they were Infants) they were admitted by Proxy.

4thly, Such only are truly qualified for Confirmation, as are devoutly disposed to improve themselves thereby, and for this reason it is that this Office is orderd to be deferred till Persons arrive at years of discretion; because before that time they are suppos'd incapable of receiving such benefits as are consequential to it; and because also the owning of their Baptismal Vow, should be as solemn as the making of it in such as are Adult. And therefore the less concern they were able to shew, when Baptism was formerly conferr'd upon them; the greater Zeal and Fervency ought they now to express, when Confirmation is about to be administred unto them. And this is all I shall urge upon this 3d. head; the due Qualification of Persons to be confirmed, in order to their admittance to this Holy Ordinance.

It now remains that I should in the 4th and last place take notice, That the due Administration of this Office, has very happy effects and entitles to great advantages; because the Samaritans (we are told) receiv'd the Holy Ghost, when the Apostles laid their hands upon them, but not before.

Many were the Miraculous effects of the Spirit, attended this Ordinance in the Primitive Church; which it were in vain to expect should accompany

pany it now, when Ordinary means are sufficient to supply all her necessities : But since our Blessed Saviour has promis'd to his Church, a constant communication of his Spirit even to the Worlds end ; we have reason to assure our selves that he still continues, to impart the usual graces and assistances of of that Spirit, by the same Ministry of Prayer and imposition of hands ; since tho' there is great difference in the Gifts and administration, yet still we know it is the same Spirit And for these Reasons, it is that the Fathers of our Church, address themselves earnestly to the Throne of Grace, in the behalf of such as they lay their hands upon ; namely, that God would strengthen them with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them his manifold Gifts of Grace ; and so lead them in the Knowledge and Obedience of his Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting Life. And without doubt there are many Blessings that attend this holy Ordinance, and are conveyed by the Bishop in the ^(s) imposition of his hands : For how (I beseech you) can they fail of a Blessing, who present themselves to God in the devoutest manner, before the Fathers of his Church and the whole Congregation ; to take upon themselves those sacred engagements, which o-

(s) Τις δὲ Πρεσβυτέρους ἐπιτίθει τὴν Χεῖρα ; τίνα δ' ἐνδόξῳσι ; Clem. Alex. *Paedag. Art. 9.*

ἢ τὴν χειροτονίαν ἐνδοξίας. Idem Lib. 1 Cap. 5.

thers enter'd into for them in their *Minority*? Is not this a most solemn attestation and Evidence, that they are desirous to *establish* and *renew* their *Covenant*? and will it not engage *God* the *other Party* in the *contract*, to make good all the *Benefits* of that *Covenant*, to them? Ought they not to look upon it as a considerable *Blessing*, that they are now no longer *Babes in Christianity*, but advanc'd to more *Manly improvements* and *Perfections*? and are enabled to go on from *Strength to Strength*, till they attain to the *Measure of the Stature of the fullness of Christ*? Is it not a great *Blessing* that they are not any longer tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine? but are settled and confirm'd so fully in the Faith, as to resolve to *Live and Dye* in the *Profession* of it? Is it not a *Blessing* most highly to be valued, that they are made capable of coming to *God's Holy Table*, and of receiving the *Bread of Life* and *Sup of Salvation*; to which none can be admitted by the rules of our *Church*, till they are ^(t) confirm'd, or at least ready and desirous so to be? These are such advantages as are very momentous, and infallibly consequent to this venerable *Ordinance*; together with those others which are specified in the *Office*, and

(t) See the last Rubrick, after the Office of Confirmation in the Common-Prayer-Book.

are called by the *Fathers* the ^(u) *Seven-fold Gifts of the Spirit*; namely the *Spirit of Wisdom and understanding, the spirit of Counsel and Ghostly Strength, the Spirit of Knowledge and true Godliness, and the Spirit of holy Fear*: and I will be bold to avow, that if these *Blessings* attend not this duty of *Confirmation*; it is only because those of *riper years* take not care, to qualify themselves so duly as they should do; and such as are *younger* have not been enough affected, with that seriousness and reverence which is required at their hands: For *God is faithful*, who has solemnly promised, that he will hearken to the devout *Prayers* of the *Fathers* of his Church; and it must be their *Impenitence, their disobedience, or unworthiness*, that obstructs the *blessed Efficacy* of their *laying hands upon them*. And thus much for the last Proposition I laid down, to observe that the *due administration* of this Office, has very happy *Effects*, and entitles to great *advantages*. To conclude,

Since *Confirmation* then is of *Apostolical Institution*, the *Ministry* of which is intrusted only to their *Successors*; since it is not to be dispensed but to such as are *duly qualified*, and it is attended with consequences of such *considerable importance*; let me exhort all those who have the guidance and

(u) Ambros. Lib. de initiand. cap. 7.
Idem de Sacramentis, Lib. 3. cap. 2.

Government, of any who are yet *unqualified* for this Ordinance; to take care to instruct them in the Principles of Christianity; that they may be able to give a reason of the hope that is in them, and be capable in due time of being admitted to it: Let me desire all such as have been confirm'd already, to consider the solemn engagements they lie under; and to be punctual in performing their *Baptismal Vow*, which if they break now involves them in a double Guilt of Perjury: And let me earnestly and affectionately perswade you all, who are now about to enter upon the performance of this duty; to bring with you good intentions and serious resolutions, of living up to the dignity of your Profession, and adorning the Gospel of God our Saviour; that so you may partake of those *inestimable benefits*, which are the certain Portion of those that are duly prepar'd for them; and which God of his infinite mercy confer upon you all, through the merits and mediation of our Blessed Saviour. To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

4 AP 65